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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [NI](#) [ELECTIONS](#)

SUBJECT: IRREGULARITIES IN PLATEAU STATE BYE-ELECTIONS

REF: A. ABUJA 2766

[¶](#)B. ABUJA 2817

[¶](#)C. ABUJA 2870

Classified By: Political Counselor Russell J. Hanks for Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[¶](#)1. (C) Fourteen members of the Plateau State House of Assembly were removed for leaving the ruling PDP (reflets), a decision inconsistent with the decision in Jigawa State and elsewhere, where INEC allowed those who had changed parties to join the PDP to retain their seats. Lawsuits continue to decide whether the Assembly members were properly removed, and one of those suits sought an injunction to prevent a bye-election from taking place on December 6 to replace them.

Media reports on December 6 indicated that a court in Abuja had granted the injunction barring the elections until legal questions were resolved.

[¶](#)2. (C) On December 6, PolOff called Plateau State Resident Electoral Commissioner Deacon Martins Okunfolami to find out INEC's plans in light of the injunction. He said that the injunction was "only a rumor," and that INEC was "going forward with our program for today." When asked if that meant INEC would be able to release results later the same night or the next day, he said they would conduct the election and then call central headquarters to "get instruction on what to do next." PolOff later spoke with Ahmed Garba, an attorney in Plateau State, who said that elections were indeed ongoing. Garba believed that Okunfolami was correct and that no injunction existed barring the elections. INEC chairman Maurice Iwu also denied in the press and to PolFSN that there was an injunction. (Note: Attempts to contact the court were unsuccessful. Post does not know whether an injunction was ever issued. End note.)

[¶](#)3. (C) On December 7, PolCouns spoke with election supervisors in 9 of the 14 districts in which elections were being held for new assembly members. According to them, the PDP had won only one of those 9 districts. When INEC announced the results of the balloting on December 8, the PDP had gained 12 of the 14 available seats.

[¶](#)4. (C) COMMENT. It appears that local officials called INEC command in Abuja to "get instruction on what to do next." The 9 people with whom PolOff spoke are normally reliable sources, and it seems unlikely that so many of them would be wrong about who won in their districts. Combined with polling while ongoing legal proceedings questioned the validity of the election, it appears to be one more electoral irregularity as Nigeria prepares for national elections in 4 months. END COMMENT.

CAMPBELL